

The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, February 5. 1695.

Quest. 1. **I** Doubt not but you are acquainted that the prince of the house of Newbourg were formerly Protestants, and that a Jesuit found the means to make them turn Papists, who afterwards himself embraced the Protestant Religion: But to me it seems strange, and therefore I desire to know from what principles these contrary effects could proceed?

Ans. There's no great miracle in either; it not being difficult for us to conceive that a man who studied controversy, and examined the grounds of both Religions should change his opinion in favour of the Protestants, or that prince should through interest of State, pass from the Protestant to the Catholic faith.

Quest. 2. Being ambitious of an universal knowledge (so far as my mean capacity may be enabled to attain it) I did lately make my applications to, and was very importunate with a Learn'd acquaintance of mine for his instructions therein. But he (through too much modesty) declining it, advis'd my addresses unto you, which occasions you this trouble. And that you may the more freely comply with my desires, I think it not amiss to acquaint you, that I'm by Profession a Lawyer, in the studies of which Science, I've made a little progress, and have also some knowledge in the Vulgar Tongues. I know, Gent. that the Law is an intricate and very laborious study, and (as an Author therein long since observ'd) requires the Whole man: And that as Plants annually transplanted, produce no Fruit; so the mind that's always hurried from its proper station will scarce ever do good in any: Yet these thoughts are insufficient to obviate those importunate desires I ever had after the acquisition of an universal knowledge, or at least a superficial inspection into all Sciences necessary for the accomplishment of a Gent. But I'm wholly at a loss what Science (besides that of my Profession) to begin, as also what authors therein to peruse, whether the more ancient or modern, &c. And in truth I must confess my Ignorance in every thing relating to a methodical study; however I've a willing mind ready both to receive and follow your directions, which I do hereby request.

Ans. Read some of our former Mercuries, and you'll see as full an account of our Judgments in this case, as we can give you, both in respect to a method for the Sciences, and what books we think best on each particular one.

Quest. 3. What course shall I take with one that has not only called me Rogue, but says he will prove me so? he being very poor and having a wife and six children, my conscience will not permit me to put him in Prison, nor can I bear to lose my good name by his means.

Ans. Since 'tis impossible to inflict any punishment upon him without making so many innocent persons suffer by it, you ought to have the more patience with him, and if 'tis like to be of little or no consequence, not to regard it: but if 'twill prove very prejudicial to you, we think you may lawfully secure your self, by first trying if you cannot make him publicly recant what he has said; which if he refuses, whatever misfortune accidentally happens to his family through your justifying your self, he only is the sole cause, and you no way guilty of it.

Quest. 4. You have been often desired, and are again intreated to give some account of the original of Samaria, from whence it had its name, whereabouts it was situate;

by whom the temple was built at Gerizim; who destroy'd it, and what were the several changes, which happen'd to this Province in respect to its inhabitants and Governors? And if the Samaritans are not deceived, in saying they have always dwelt near Gerizim?

Ans. This Country lay between Judea properly so call'd, and Galilee. The mountain upon which it was built belong'd to a certain man call'd Shemer, of whom Omri King of Israel bought it, and thereupon this City was call'd Samaria, Kings 16. 24. Some of the antients, who did not remember this passage, have believed that this word came from Shamar, to keep, because the King of Assyria who had led the inhabitants of that Country away Captive, sent new colonies thither to keep it. And the Modern Samaritans also who rejected the Histories of the Jews, maintain that they had their name from that Hebrew word [to keep;] because, they say, they faithfully kept the Law of Moses; but 'tis no uncommon thing to see Histories maintain'd from pretended Etymologies, since we have instances enough of it both from the Greeks and Latins; one of which we have from the Romans, who said, that Latium had its name from Latere to hide, upon which they have invented that Circumstance in the fable of Saturn, of hiding himself in Italy that he might not be taken by his son.

This town was the Capital of the ten tribes, until it was taken by Salmaneser after a siege of three years, when 'tis probable 'twas entirely razed, from Micah 1. 6. altho the sacred History says nothing of it. And 'tis very likely 'twas again rebuilt by the Cuthites who erected a Temple at Gerizim, which was thrown down by Hyrcanus an hundred and eight years before our Saviour's time. Josephus tells us that this prince so utterly destroy'd both Temple and City, that there remain'd no marks that there had ever been any Town standing there. A long time after which, Gabinius Governour of Syria reestablished it, perhaps to keep Judea in awe, and gave it the name of Gabinia, which it kept till Herod's time, who having imbellish'd it, call'd it Sebastia in honour of Augustus. Yet for all this, a Neighbouring Town call'd Neapolis, and at this time, Napalouse, was afterwards more Celebrated, and pass'd for the Capital of Samaria. And some modern Authors have confounded Sebastia and Napalouse, but Cellarius shows their mistake, by proving that this last City is the same with the ancient Shechem, situated at the foot of Mount Gerizim; mention'd in Judges, 9. 7. verse. After the King of Syria had subdued Samaria, he sent men to inhabit there from Babylon, from Cuth, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim: We have no very good account whereabouts these four last places were, but 'tis very probable the Cuthites were either best known or most numerous, because the Jews have since call'd the Samaritans by that name. Josephus and some authors after him have affirm'd that Cuth was in Persia, and Huet says, that one part of Susian which the Greeks named Cissia was so call'd: But Scaliger thought the Cuthites were a people of Colchide, because there was a Town call'd Cusum, the inhabitants whereof had received Circumcision, which custom he believed was introduced by some of the Israelites being carry'd thither; altho this opinion is contrary to what has been received from antiquity. The Scripture says absolutely that the Israelites were led Captive into Assyria, and Media. And altho the chief habitation of the Samaritans is at Napalouse, yet some modern Relations assure us that there are some of 'em at Grand Cair, Gaza, and other places. They are very ignorant of their own

own antiquity, because they will not receive any account from the Jews, and have none that is particular to themselves, that is any thing exact. They believe themselves all descended from the Tribes of *Ashram*, *Manasseh*, and *Levi*. They were first submitted to the *Affrians*, then to the *Babylonians*, and afterwards to the *Persians*; who sent them Governours, the last of which was *Sanballat*, who obtain'd a permission of *Darius* to build a Temple upon the Mount of *Gerizim* in favour of his Son in Law *Maddab* brother to *Jaddus* the high Priest of the Jews, and after *Darius* was overcome by *Alexander* he paid homage to the last, and assisted him with Soldiers at the siege of *Tyre*. But he dying was succeeded by *Andromachus*, whom according to *Quintus Curtius* the *Samaritans* burnt alive being enraged by his great severity towards them. *Josephus*, who omitted nothing that could add to the Glory of his Nation, says, that *Alexander* would not grant the *Samaritans* that Exemption of the 7th year's Tribute, as he did to the Jews. The same Historian likewise saith, that they had a dispute with the Jews before *Philip*; these last affirming, according to the Principles of the *Mosaic Law*, that the true Temple of the God of *Israel*, was that at *Jerusalem*; and the *Samaritans* pretended 'twas that at *Gerizim*: Some have believed that by the *Samaritans* he meant those who lived in *Egypt*, because the inhabitants of *Napalouse* had been subjects to the Kings of *Syria* from the time of *Antiochus Epiphane*s, and had had their Governours from thence; He assuring us that they offer'd to *Antiochus* to have their Temple call'd the Temple of the Jupiter of the Greeks. But however, it was *Egyptians* subdued them, after which *Gabinius*, having built their City, and *Herod* beautified it, as we have before observed, his Son *Archelaus* by his right inherited the Province of *Samarita*, with some others which he possessed himself of, by the consent of *Augustus*, on condition he should remit to the *Samaritans* one 4th part of their Tribute; because when all *Judea* was up in Rebellion, they alone were peaceable, and did not take Arms. But *Archelaus* being banished, they sent them an Intendant from *Rome*: sometime after which *Agrippa* obtaining the Title of King, possessed *Samarita*; and to succeed him the *Samaritans* had again *New Roman* Intendants. From *Vespasian's* time, that Countrey had the same Fate with the rest of *Judea*; although *Josephus* says nothing of it, but that *Titus* pass'd with his Army through *Napalouse*. Under *Adrian*, who put so great a Number of the Jews to Death, nothing happen'd extraordinary to the *Samaritans*; we don't so much as find them mentioned in the History of that time, except in a Letter of *Adrian* to the Consul *Servianus*, where he says, That all the Religions of *Aegypt* adored *Serapis*, without excepting the Jews, *Samaritans* and *Christians*. The *Samaritans* of *Napalouse* having a long time resisted *Severus*, he at last took from them all their former Privileges, but soon after permitted them to enjoy them again. In the succeeding ages it appears that the *Samaritans* did not only dwell in *Judea* and the Neighbouring provinces, but that some of 'em were at *Constantinople* and some at *Rome*. 'Tis plain from *Cassiodorus* that they had a Synagogue at *Rome* from the time of *Theodoric*, since he tells us, they redemanded an house which was fallen into the hands of the *Ecclesiastics*, because it was formerly given to them for a Synagogue. Some Authors expressly tell us they rebelled in *Justinian's* time and ill treated the Christians in the province of *Samarita*, for which reason all of 'em were banish'd out of *Judea*, except those who became Christians. And these seditions were the only reason why they were used so severely. Thus, when we consult so many *Authentic* authors, the ignorance of the present *Samaritans* plainly appears, who affirm they have continued near the Mount of *Gerizim*, ever since *Moses* brought them out of *Egypt*.

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